

# COUNTY OF FAUQUIER OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

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#### June 30, 2006

Honorable Board of Supervisors and Citizens of Fauquier County:

The budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2007, adopted on March 30, 2006, has been prepared in accordance with Chapter 4 of Section 15.2 of the Code of Virginia. The Adopted Budget represents the official County plan of revenues and expenditures for the Fiscal Year of July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007.

According to Virginia Code, a County budget is a work plan, expressed in terms of dollars, representing a tool for fiscal management. It is prepared and developed as a plan of County operations, maintenance, capital outlay, and debt service for a one-year period.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Similar to most Virginia jurisdictions, Fauquier County faces growing demands for services, new facilities and rising operating costs. This is especially true of support for education. Requests for funding from all sources exceeded revenue projections by more than \$65.1 million.

The County Budget was adopted in late March before the full impact of the State Budget was known. As of the preparation of this document, the Virginia General Assembly was at an impasse on its FY 2007 budget. With the level of State funding unsure, maintaining essential operations, and funding important growth in services and programs while minimizing the impact of taxes on County citizens was a significant challenge. Addressing this challenge required months of review and deliberations with staff, citizens and the Board of Supervisors. The Board recognized it could not meet all the requests identified in the budget process and that there will be even greater demands on limited resources in future years due to the scheduled opening of new schools and parks and recreation facilities.

The quadrennial real estate assessment, completed in FY 2006, reflected a significant increase in property values in addition to growth in residential and commercial property. This enabled the Board of Supervisors to support vital programs, yet reduce the overall real estate tax rate for FY 2007 from \$0.99 to \$0.645 per \$100 of assessed value.

For FY 2007, enhancements to citizen involvement and the use of the Internet were instrumental in continuing to improve the budget as a policy document and financial plan. Citizen involvement included expanded participation in numerous budget workgroups, including the Capital Improvements Program Review Committee that develops major capital funding recommendations for the next ten years. Citizen participation in the process allowed the County to benefit from the direct input and perspective of taxpayers when developing the budget. During the budget process, briefings were provided to a number of citizen groups both to inform and to receive comments on the proposed budget. This initiative resulted in an improved understanding by concerned citizens of the budget elements and identification of citizen budget issues.

The Budget Office's Internet web page was expanded to provide additional information on budget timelines, status updates and an extensive budget summary for citizens and County staff during the development process. The web page is also used to solicit and respond to inquiries concerning the budget and the budget process, as well as other financial actions taken during the year. Use of the Internet as a mode of communication will continue to expand in the future to include surveys and responses to related inquiries. For FY 2007, the Budget and the 10 year Capital Improvements Program can be accessed through the Internet or is available on CD.

# **REVENUE PLAN**

As a result of the completion of a quadrennial real estate reassessment which became effective January 1, 2006, total taxable real property assessment values for Calendar Year (CY) 2006 are \$11.7 billion, an increase of \$5.9 billion over CY 2005. Real property taxable parcels for CY 2006 total 30,478 (1.7 percent) over CY 2005. The overall tax rate for FY 2007 is \$0.645 with the General Rate reduced from \$0.99 to \$0.60, the Fire and Rescue Levy reduced from \$0.045 to \$0.035 and the Purchase of Development Rights Levy reduced from \$0.02 to \$0.01.

The personal property tax rate will remain unchanged at the 1998 level of \$4.65 per \$100 assessed value for motor vehicles. For FY 2007, the rates for special personal property tax classifications, such as equipment for the disabled, also remain at the 1998 level. Personal property tax on aircraft will be lowered to \$0.001 per \$100 assessed value.

General Fund revenue estimates for FY 2007 were impacted in a number of positive ways. Economic conditions resulting in new residential and commercial construction, as well as car and home purchases are anticipated to increase revenue from several elements. Also, improving interest rates have significantly enhanced projections on revenue from County investments. Offsetting some of these gains is the impact from real estate tax revenue on Public Service facilities. These facilities, such as power plants, are assessed annually by the Commonwealth. With the reduction in the real estate tax rate for CY 2006, this element of revenue will experience a measurable decrease. Of the \$23.1 million in new General Fund Revenue, \$20.7 million is projected in the General Property Tax category. This revenue category includes: Real Estate Tax, Public Services, and Personal Property Tax. The Other Local Tax category, which includes Sales Tax and Recording Tax and Fees, accounts for \$1.4 million of the new revenue. Use of Money and Property is projected to add an additional \$1.8 million, primarily due to revenue from investments. The Permits, Fees, and Licenses category is expected to generate an additional \$257,000, the bulk of which will be generated through Community Development fees.

Reflecting the Board of Supervisors' continued fiscal conservatism, the FY 2007 Budget does not use any fund balances to support operations. One of the County's principle financial policies is to establish and maintain an unreserved, undesignated General Fund balance of not less than ten percent of General Fund Revenues. This goal was met at the end of FY 2005 when fund balances in excess of ten percent were used to address a number of School and County non-recurring facility issues on a cash basis. Only through the maintenance of an adequate level of fund balance can the County sustain operations during economic downturns, minimize adjustments in taxes and fees, and realize cost savings in issuing debt.

FY 2007 will also see the Board of Supervisors' continued efforts to minimize the tax burden on senior citizens through expansion of tax relief for the elderly and the disabled program increasing the limits for income to \$58,000, the net combined financial worth to \$440,000 and increasing the exclusion of income of a relative residing in the home to \$10,000. In addition to these financial amendments, the Board increased the amount of land that may be exempted from one acre to five. It is anticipated that the number of participants in this program will increase 11 percent, resulting in exonerations exceeding \$1.5 million in real estate taxes for the lowest income senior citizen homeowners in Fauquier County.

# **EXPENDITURE PLAN**

The FY 2007 Expenditure Plan for all County funds is \$256.7 million, an increase of \$50.1 million (24.3 percent) over the FY 2006 Adopted Budget. The primary factors for this net increase are local, State and Federal funding for the School Division, increased operational support in the General Fund, and borrowing for construction. Over half of the increase, \$25.2 million, is construction debt funding, primarily for new school facilities.

## **General Fund**

The General Fund expenditure plan, excluding Schools, totals \$64.8 million, an increase of \$15.7 million (31.9 percent). Education continues to be a high priority with a budget allocation of \$121.6 million including a local funding commitment of \$80.0 million. General Fund support to education increased by \$7.3 million (10.1 percent) over the FY 2006 Adopted Budget level. The transfer to the School Division represents 55.2 percent of the General Fund appropriations, not including the allocation of shared services, which represents an additional \$6.1 million of local support.

## **Personnel**

The FY 2007 Adopted Budget also contains several changes in personnel related costs. With expanding workload from various vital functions, a number of positions were added during FY 2006 and for FY 2007. Primary emphasis was in support of maintaining County and School Division facilities by the General Services Department and recreation facilities and programs by the Parks and Recreation Department.

#### Staffing Adjustments,

# Positions Added During FY 2006

#### General Fund:

Senior Accountant, Financial Systems Manager Finance Department

Assistant Park Manager, Lake Brittle Parks and Recreation Department

Office Associate, Adult Detention Center Sheriff's Office

Engineer/Environmental Planner Community Development

Assistant Director Community Development
A Shop Technician (2) General Services Department
Communications Technician General Services Department
Inventory Control Clerk General Services Department

Classification and Compensation Analyst Human Resources Department

Safety Operations Officer Emergency Services Department

Dispatcher (2) Joint Communications

# Positions Added For FY 2007

#### General Fund:

Office Associate, Zoning

Community Development

Protection/Adult Services Social Worker

Social Services Department

Eligibility Worker Social Services Department
Laborer/Custodian Parks and Recreation Department

Assistant Manager, Crockett Park

Parks and Recreation Department

Parks and Recreation Department

Assistant Director Parks and Recreation Department
Office Associate Parks and Recreation Department

Water Resource Management Program Manager Geographic Information System

Librarian I, Technical Services Library

Network Administrator Information Technology Department

## Other Fund Staffing Adjustments:

# Positions Added During FY 2006

Dispatcher (2) Joint Communications

#### Positions Added For FY 2007

Office Associate (20 Hours) Airport

Office Assistant (30 Hours) Purchase of Development Rights

## Position Eliminated For FY 2007

Office Assistant Registrar

Employee compensation and healthcare costs also received priority for FY 2007. This includes a Virginia Retirement System rate increase, funding of the pay and classification study completed

in FY 2006, pay for performance awards and a cost of living adjustment. A pay and classification study is conducted approximately every four years to determine the comparability of County employee titles, duties and compensation compared to those of other local jurisdictions and the private sector. The system-wide Pay for Performance Program initiative implemented in FY 2001 continued to be emphasized. The performance merit pool for FY 2007 is three percent of FY 2007 total salaries. Actual merit increase awards may range higher or lower than the three percent based on the results of the performance evaluations. The cost of living adjustment for FY 2007 is three and a half percent.

To avoid an increase in healthcare costs to employees in FY 2007, the County will absorb the projected increase in premiums for full time employees. Significant adjustments to the healthcare plan in FY 2006 mitigated the historical annual double digit percentage cost increase. Projected healthcare costs for FY 2007 are expected to increase approximately 7.5 percent. In the future, employees sharing more of the cost increase is highly probable.

# **General Government Administration**

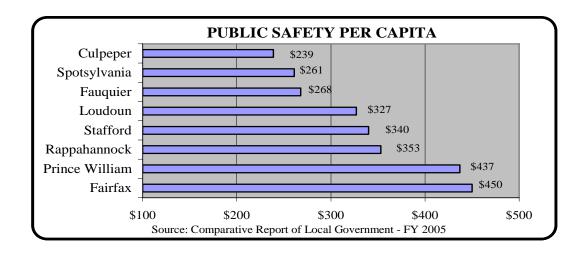
General Government Administration represents 6.9 percent (\$10.0 million) of the total General Fund expenditures. General Government Administration includes 12 departments: Board of Supervisors, Commissioner of the Revenue, County Administration, County Attorney, Finance, Independent Auditor, Information Technology, Budget Office, Human Resources, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Registrar and the Treasurer. The FY 2007 General Government Administration budget increased \$1.1 million (12.4 percent) from FY 2006. A major initiative affecting this growth was emphasis on water resource management with funding of \$250,000 to conduct studies on ground water issues and the establishment of a full time Water Resource Manager. For FY 2007, additional positions were added for Departments within this category including: a Financial Reporting System Accountant for the Finance Department to conduct research in replacing the current financial system, Classification/Compensation Analyst for Human Resources Department and a Network Administrator for the Information Technology Department to support expanding County and School Division data center operations. additional increase of approximately \$165,000 represents the realignment of funding for contribution organizations from another area of the budget. The bulk of the remaining growth in this expenditure category is attributed to healthcare costs and compensation related issues.

#### **Judicial Administration**

Judicial Administration appropriations of \$2.8 million represent 2.0 percent of the total General Fund budget. This is an increase of \$221,000 (8.5 percent) over the FY 2006 funding level. This category includes Adult Court Services, Circuit Court, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Commissioner of Accounts, Commonwealth's Attorney, General District Court, Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court and the Magistrates. The single largest element contributing to the increase for FY 2007 was a Commonwealth of Virginia grant of \$80,000 to the Clerk of the Circuit Court for the continued implementation of a land record management program. As with the other expenditure categories, a portion of the increase is attributable to merit pay, VRS rate increase and healthcare related costs. It is also to be noted that, with the exception of merit pay and benefit funding, over 40 percent of the offices and agencies in this budget category have received minimal funding increases during the past three years.

## **Public Safety**

Public Safety related appropriations represent 8.5 percent (\$13.7 million) of the total General Government expenditures, an increase of 11.2 percent (\$1.4 million). The most significant elements of this increase were the implementation of the pay and classification study recommendations and provision of salary compaction adjustments for the Sheriff's Office personnel. After several years of high turnover, this action was taken to improve recruitment and retention of sworn personnel. Additional funding was provided to meet the increased costs of fuel for both the Sheriff's Office and the Fire and Emergency Services Department. This expenditure category also includes the local Detention Center, Northwestern Regional Adult Detention Center, Juvenile Detention and Juvenile Probation. For FY 2007, the County's share of Northwestern Regional Adult Detention Facility operations increased 15.6 percent as the result of adding 22 new positions to support growth in the inmate population. Future funding support can also be expected to increase due to plans to continue expanding the facility. FY 2008 should reflect the full impact of this expansion.



# **Public Works**

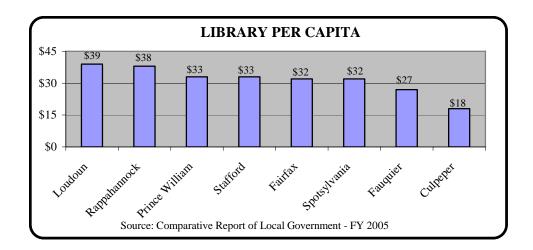
Public Works, consisting of the Solid Waste Convenience Sites and the Department of General Services, represents 4.4 percent (\$6.4 million) of the General Fund budget. For FY 2007, this category was increased 18.0 percent (\$975,000). Expansion of County and School facilities in the past several years, including Auburn Middle School, and the recent significant increase in the costs of maintenance contracts, building materials and supplies has necessitated increasing operational funding and staffing for the General Services Department. Three technicians and a material inventory position have been added to address maintenance related issues. Upkeep of existing facilities is one of the Board of Supervisors' highest priorities. Included in Public Works are the Environmental Convenience Sites, which in FY 2007 will receive additional funding based on increased tipping fees and to support the tipping fees of Fauquier County's incorporated towns.

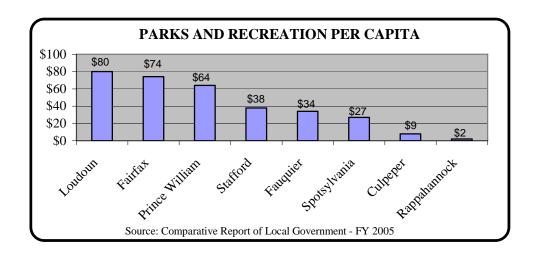
## **Health and Welfare**

The Health and Welfare related appropriations totaling \$8.7 million represents 6.0 percent of the total General Fund Budget. This is an increase of 11.3 percent from FY 2006. Included in this expenditure category are Community Services Board, Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) Office, Public Health and Social Services. The majority of Health and Welfare funding is provided for expanded Social Services related programs such as Senior Adult and Family Preservation Services. Two social worker positions were approved to support these programs for FY 2007. Other funding increases were provided to support expanded access for low income County residents to the regional assisted living and skilled nursing facilities. Of the increased Social Services costs, approximately 58.4 percent will be funded by Federal and State revenue. After several years of minimal funding increases, the CSA Office, which works with special needs youth and their families, received additional funding to support a growing number of atrisk children. Of the CSA increase, 59.9 percent is supported by additional State funding.

#### **Culture**

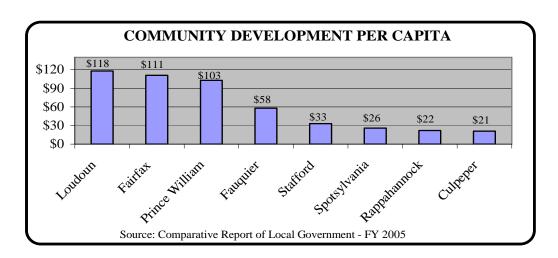
Culture appropriations of \$5.1 million represent 3.5 percent of the total General Fund Budget. This category includes the Library, Parks and Recreation, and support for Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC). For FY 2007, funding increased 22.1 percent from FY 2006. Contributing to this increase was the addition of six positions, two Parks and Recreation Assistant Park Managers to support operations at Crockett Park and at Lake Brittle, a Laborer/Custodian to help maintain facilities in the Southern Park Region and an Assistant Department Director and Office Associate to better support, monitor and improve existing and expanding programs in the Parks and Recreation Department. To address the growing amount of new material being added to the Library's inventory, a Technical Services Librarian was approved for the Warrenton Library. For FY 2007, in compliance with a Memorandum of Understanding with LFCC, support to the College will increase 456 percent (\$202,000). This significant growth in funding will support planned new construction at LFCC.





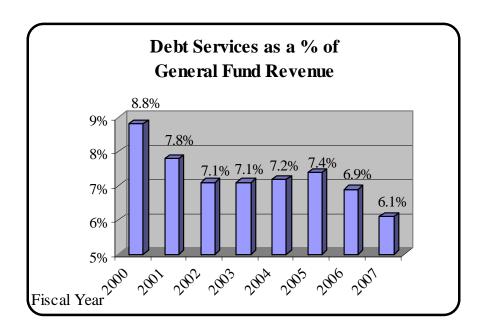
# **Community Development**

Community Development related appropriations are 3.0 percent (\$4.4 million) of the total General Government expenditures. This category includes Community Development, Agriculture Development, Economic Development, Extension Office, John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District and the Planning Commission/Board of Zoning Appeals. In achieving a net increase of approximately \$83,000 for FY 2007, \$470,090 in contributions to community organizations was redistributed to various departments in other expenditure categories for enhanced management and control. An increase of \$371,000 was provided to the Community Development Department to address continued growth in the number of development applications. Three positions, Assistant Director, Engineer/Environmental Planner and Office Associate, were added to mitigate the expanding workload. Offsetting this increase is the projection of \$244,000 in new revenue from related Community Development fees. Plans are currently underway to improve the response time on processing development applications. This is especially true of commercial applications which are one of the Board of Supervisors' priorities.



## **Debt Service**

The General Fund Debt Service reflects the lease/purchase funds for the branch library in Bealeton and debt service related to the purchase of an emergency public radio system in FY 2003.



The School Operating Fund accounts for 88.6 percent, (\$7.8 million), of the County's total debt service expense. Current planned borrowing for FY 2007 totals \$49.8 million. This includes \$39.0 million of the \$67.5 million to construct the County's third High School, \$9.0 million of \$17.5 million to build an elementary school in the central district and \$1.6 for the purchase of land to construct an elementary school in the southern region. The actual amount borrowed could increase based on the pace that these projects are developed and enter the construction or implementation phase. The debt service cost for these three projects will appear in the FY 2008 Budget. In analyzing the need for new or upgraded facilities and funding alternatives, the County continues to maintain debt service within the 10 percent of General Fund Revenue guidelines established by the Board of Supervisors. While the FY 2007 Debt Service ratio is at the lowest level in over seven years, planned construction in the next several years will result in this ratio moving closer to the 10 percent guideline.

# **School Operating Fund**

Support of the School Division is the one of the highest priorities for the Board of Supervisors. For FY 2007, the School Operating Fund budget rose \$11.9 million (10.8 percent). Local County funding transfers increased \$7.3 million (10.1 percent) to \$80.0 million. An additional \$4.3 million was appropriated by the County in reserve for cash funding a portion of the cost of the construction of the third high school. These funds will be used in FY 2008 to support the debt service for funds borrowed in FY 2007 for School capital projects. Reflecting the Board of

Supervisors' emphasis on education, the direct local support increase to the School Division for FY 2007 is double the increase provided in FY 2006. Indirect support from the Unified Service Departments of Finance, Human Resources, General Services and the Office of Comprehensive Services increased 10.4 percent. Funding from the State increased 12.4 percent and from the Federal Government 2.2 percent. School Board budget emphasis included attracting and maintaining high quality staff through enhanced employee compensation. For FY 2007, increased compensation for staff is approximately 7.5 percent. A beginning teacher's salary will become more competitive as it was increased to \$37,500, up 7.9 percent from FY 2006. In the effort to improve starting teacher compensation, the School Division has to increase salaries by 16.5 percent in two years. Other compensation issues addressed by the School Board were a 2.6 percent increase in Virginia Retirement Services (VRS) rates and adding bus drivers to the VRS program. The School Board also absorbed the projected growth in healthcare costs for all full time employees, as did the Board of Supervisors. The School Operating Fund also includes program growth to support the projected addition of 191 students and the impact of inflationary issues such as the fuel costs.

# **Capital Improvements Fund**

The additions to the Capital Improvements Fund, including the Capital Improvements Program (CIP), for FY 2007 total \$50.0 million; 95 percent (\$47.5 million) are attributable to School Division projects. This is the largest appropriation for construction ever made by Fauquier County in a single fiscal year. The School projects include funding for a third high school and two elementary schools all of which will be bond-supported. Also included is cash funding for replacement of Sheriff's vehicles, improved telecommunication systems, renovation of the Alice Jane Childs Office Building, renovation of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) facility and appropriations for preliminary planning and design of a public safety facility.

#### **Volunteer Fire & Rescue Fund**

Based on the impact of the reassessment, funding for Fire and Rescue Fund was reduced from \$0.045 to \$0.035 per \$100 of assessed value of real property. Despite this levy decrease, the Volunteer Fire and Rescue Fund received a 46.8 percent (\$1.4 million) increase in funding. These funds will be used primarily to increase contributions to individual volunteer companies by 32 percent, support the debt service for renovation of the Warrenton and Remington Fire and Rescue Stations and to construct new facilities at Catlett and New Baltimore.

## **Airport Enterprise Fund**

For FY 2007, the Airport Enterprise Fund increased \$13,974 (4.4 percent) from the FY 2006 Adopted Budget. This small adjustment provides funding a part time, permanent Office Associate to support the Airport Manager.

#### **Economic Development**

The Fauquier County Department of Economic Development has the primary responsibility of working to expand the economic base of Fauquier County by introducing new businesses to the County, by supporting the growth of existing businesses and encouraging the expansion of tourism. The private sector is represented through the Economic Development Advisory Council and the Tourism Advisory Committee.

Records indicate there was continued growth in all economic sectors during CY 2005. The Commissioner of the Revenue for Fauquier County issued 234 new business licenses in CY 2005 representing a 10 percent increase over the number issued in CY 2004. The Virginia Employment Commission reported that the unemployment rate in Fauquier County for CY 2005 averaged 2.0 percent as compared to 3.0 percent for the State of Virginia and 4.6 percent for the Country as a whole. The number of persons employed by Fauquier County businesses rose by 5.19 percent, increasing from 20,718 in CY 2004 to 21,974 in CY 2005. Fauquier County's business sector paid in excess of \$13.4 million in total taxes in CY 2005 as compared to \$12.3 million in CY 2004. This figure is 15.2 percent of the total tax base in Fauquier County, and represents an increase over CY 2003 levels (14.8 percent) and CY 2004 (14.6 percent) and nearly matched the percentage for CY 2001 (15.4 percent). Medical and banking service growth remained the two most rapidly expanding business sectors in Fauquier County during CY 2005. However, the industrial and manufacturing sectors have showed a surprisingly upward trend.

Tourism development is also showing an increasing economic benefit to Fauquier County. The leisure and hospitality sector represented 13.4 percent of the total employment in Fauquier County in CY 2005. Retail trade, which benefits from expanding visitor trade, represents an additional 13.8 percent of the employment base. Web site visits to the County tourism web page have increased steadily from 4,500 visits in the first quarter 2005 to over 11,000 visits in the fourth quarter CY 2005. With the support of the Board of Supervisors, the business base of Fauquier County and the Town of Warrenton is growing.

## **LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE**

Improved economic conditions and anticipated revenue growth for FY 2007 enabled support of essential County and School functions. However, while a number of priorities, including those identified by the Board of Supervisors, were addressed in this year's budget, there are many unfunded needs which will be competing against limited future revenues. Major issues including the impact of population growth, County and School Division facility needs, maintenance of existing structures, employees' healthcare costs and the need to balance the compensation requirements of public employees, County and School, with the expectations of citizens for stable tax rates, will need to be addressed in future budgets. The most significant issue facing the County in the next few years is the need to maintain and expand facilities. The ten year Capital Improvements Plan contains 38 construction projects, including four schools, two libraries and a new office building totaling more than \$211.3 million with annual operating costs of over \$18 million. A new high school and two new elementary schools costing approximately \$104.2 million to construct and \$13.2 million annually to operate are expected to be open in the next three years. The building of these new schools will have a monumental impact on the financial status of the County and the Board of Supervisors' ability to address

other operational needs. Due to the magnitude of the projects, a tax increase appears to be inevitable. This is especially true in FY 2009 when the new high school and at least one of the elementary schools are projected to open.

To lessen the impact of residential growth on services, the County established a Conservation Easement Service District (CESD) Fund in FY 2005 for the purchase of property development rights. The CESD Fund is supported by a level of one cent per \$100 assessed value of real estate tax revenue, as well as revenue generated by tax penalties on land removed from special use tax categories. The initial funding for this program was achieved through reductions of other elements in the General County Government budget. It is hoped the CESD program can be expanded in future years to help maintain the treasured agricultural and cultural heritage of Fauquier County and slow increased demands for services and service-related costs due to development.

To meet the many budget challenges and maintain a proactive financial posture, Fauquier County has developed a Ten Year Financial Plan for operational planning and budget development. Our multi-year projection of revenues and expenditures in the Ten Year Financial Plan will permit policy makers and staff to improve forecasts of future needs, especially the projected growth and impact of school age children. This instrument will also be used to determine the impact of commercial and residential development on the County's infrastructure.

To ensure, overall operational and budget focus, in addition to the Board of Supervisors' goals, the County has developed management objectives and effective and efficient measures to achieve three primary objectives based on the County's Vision Statement, in addition to the Board of Supervisors goals. These objectives are:

- 1. Balance Quality Service with Fiscal Integrity.
- 2. Manage Growth in a Manner that Protects the County's Agriculture, Environment, Quality of Life, and Historic Resources.
- 3. Conduct County Government Openly.

For FY 2007, Fauquier County departments and offices have continued to refine the development of specific management performance objectives and quantifiable performance measures. These objectives address both long term and short term goals. The identification of these objectives into easily understood terms and measures will be beneficial to both the administration and County citizens in determining the efficiency and effectiveness of County government. Using these objectives, the departments and offices can more easily align their activities to the County's overall goals. The progress on these objectives will be reported to the Board of Supervisors semi-annually.

In its effort to provide the highest quality of services to our citizens in a cost effective manner, the Board of Supervisors will continue to examine alternatives to tax rate increases. These alternatives will include review of current programs for opportunities to improve efficiency, seeking additional non-tax derived revenue sources, managing the growth of programs and services, seeking new and innovative ways to involve the public in the budgeting process.

# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I recognize, with sincere appreciation, the outstanding efforts of the individuals in the Budget Office, and services provided by the Commissioner of the Revenue's Office, the Treasurer's Office, the Finance Department and the Revenue Committee in the preparation of this budget.

I look forward to working with the Board of Supervisors to accomplish, in the most efficient and effective manner possible, the priorities that have been established for the County.

Sincerely,

Paul S. McCulla County Administrator